

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**JOHN 4****John 4**

John chapter four begins with Jesus leaving the city of Jerusalem and the Roman province of Judea and traveling back to the Galilee, away from the snooping eyes of the temple priests and religious elders of the people. The scripture makes note **"That He needed to go through Samaria."** (John 4:4) The route through Samaria was the most beautiful and historic way to go north to south and back from the Roman province of Galilee, but it was also fraught with the most potential for conflict with those who dwelt there.

There were three primary north-south routes in ancient times. The Via Maris, the way of the sea, was just as the name implies. It ran from Egypt in North Africa all the way to Syria and then to what is modern-day Syria, Turkey, or to Mesopotamia to the east. This path led through the Arun pass that led into the Jezreel Valley near Megiddo. Sometimes referred to as the "Coastal Road." The high roads in the Judean and Samaritan mountains began near Beersheba in the south and ran along the mountain tops north to Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Bethel, Shiloh, all the way to Mount Gerizim and to Shechem below in the valley. This was the most dangerous, as the Samaritans lived there. They had their own form of worship and place of worship with their own rituals in direct conflict with the Jews. This is mentioned in the conversation that the Lord had with the woman at the Jacob's Well near Shechem. The third road on the western side of the Jordan River was the road that ran on either side of the Jordan River through the great Syrian African rift valley. This was the way

most often Jesus would have traveled because Jesus is known to have gone through Jericho, but also in Beth Arba, on the "other side" of the Jordan, which one must consider that all directions have the western side of the Jordan River as the center of all directions in the Bible, and the city of Jerusalem as the epicenter.

Jesus encountered and engaged the woman from Samaria as she came from the city to get water. Jesus asked this woman for water, and she was surprised that a Jewish man would ask her for anything. The Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans and vice versa. In the midst of the conversation, Jesus stated that He was the Messiah and that He could give her "Living water" that would quench the thirst of her soul. She began to talk about the rituals of worship related to the Jews and Samaritans, and Jesus centered in on the person of God Himself. **"God is Spirit,"** and those who seek to worship God must realize that God is in essence "Spirit" and that anyone who comes to Him must realize that He is the God of Truth, and the worshipper must come to worship Him in **"Spirit and Truth."** The woman realized that Jesus was more than a prophet; He was the promised Messiah. She left what she was doing and ran into the city and told everyone about Jesus and the people of the city came, and when they heard the Lord Jesus, they believed. They first believed because of the woman's testimony, but after hearing Jesus, they believed what He said, and their lives were forever changed.

Prayer and Action Steps

In the Sovereignty of God, Jesus went a different path that He normally journeyed so that He could tell a woman the Good News of salvation. It was His plan and His purpose. He did not allow racial and religious barriers to hinder His message of Spirit and Truth. Lord, thank You for going out of Your way to show a rejected people the way of salvation.